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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 001809

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ARN, NEA/ARP
TEL AVIV FOR DCM LEBARON
RIYADH FOR TUELLER
TUNIS FOR NATALIE BROWN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/07/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SY](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: (C) ASAD TELLS GOK HE WANTS DIALOGUE WITH USG,
SUCCESS FOR IRAQ

Classified By: CDA FRANK URBANCIC; REASON 1.4 (B, D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: According to the Kuwaiti FM, Syrian President Asad used a brief visit June 6 to ask the GOK to tell the USG he is serious about working together to promote stability in Iraq. Asad was reportedly very concerned about the Syria Accountability Act, particularly the insertion of the Patriot Act into it, and eager to do some horsetrading with the US. The visit reportedly was marred by Asad's unexplained early departure. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah gave Charge a readout June 7 on the visit the previous day of Syrian President Bashar al-Asad (other topics septels). He said Asad had been very concerned about the Syria Accountability Act (SAA), particularly "the insertion of the Patriot Act within the SAA," and had complained the USG was being contradictory: it did not want Syria to interfere in Iraq, but it did want Syria to influence Iraqis to support the political process. Asad had asked the Kuwaitis to convey to the USG the seriousness of his desire to restore the deteriorating relationship and to cooperate for the stability of Iraq. Asad had expressed the sense that Syria and the US could accomplish a lot together. He had reminded his hosts of Syria's helpful role in the liberation of Kuwait, and of its intelligence contributions against Al-Qaeda.

3. (C) Dr. Mohammed perceived that Asad's "sentiment was very different from those around him"; the President had remarked that he belongs to a new generation "not very attached to old slogans," but he needs to show the people that his course of action brings benefits. The Minister summarized Asad's message as wanting to bargain "like in Souq al-Hammadiyya." Charge promised to relay the message, but noted that we have a direct dialogue with Syria already, therefore he doubted that Washington would wish to use Kuwait as a channel to communicate with Syria.

4. (C) Dr. Mohammed mentioned with some amusement that Asad had criticized his own radio station's commentary as being contrary to his official policy. He had insisted that the SARG wishes Iraq the very best, wants a good election in January, and will accept any Iraqi government that is acceptable to the Iraqi people. That said, Syria would consider the Iraqi Interim Government to be the de-facto, not de-jure, government of Iraq, because it was not elected. Charge said the US looked forward to the next free and fair elections in Syria.

5. (C) The Minister mentioned in passing that Asad had come and gone June 6. According to the French Ambassador (protect), the Kuwaitis had expected him to spend the night and were furious when he curtailed his visit without giving a reason, after they had organized the usual lavish banquet in his honor.

URBANCIC